

BALTIMORE COUNTY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MAGI #0306554334

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC AQUILLA RANDALL MONUMENT

BA-635

AND/OR COMMON

✓ NORTH POINT BATTLE MONUMENT

2 LOCATION

ELECTION DISTRICT 15
MIDDLE RIVER QUAD

STREET & NUMBER

3970 Old North Point Road

7th Councilmanic District

CITY, TOWN

DUNDALK X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd Congressional District

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY
Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. J. Sheridan McClees

Office:

Telephone #: 727-2956

STREET & NUMBER

3 E. Lexington Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21202

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #: EHK JR. 5751

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Courts Building

Folio #: 767

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

MARYLAND HISTORIC SITES SURVEY: BALTIMORE COUNTY

DATE ONGOING SINCE 1964

NORTH POINT BATTLE MONUMENT ENTERED 4/6/72 ☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CITY, TOWN

ANNAPOIS

STATE

MARYLAND 21401

7 DESCRIPTION

B4-635

CONDITION☐ EXCELLENT☐ GOOD☐ FAIR☒ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE *☐ MOVED DATE _____

*Not certain

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The authentic, 1817, part of the monument is the pointed shaft, square base, and flat pedestal, as shown in J. Hill's engraving of 1820. It was about four feet high as described in the American of July 28, 1817. (See McCauley, Md. Historical Prints, p. 130).

As it existed prior to July 20, 1977, the monument was described as follows:

The remainder of the monument, the five steps in cast concrete, the 16-foot-plus square iron fence, and the 90 by 20-foot elliptical lawn retained by curbstone material, was all added in 1945 by Eli Buniavas. The white paint applied by him at that time has faded to gray, but the black lettering survives in part. The monument is in reasonably good condition. At present it is not certain whether Mr. Buniavas built his concrete wedding cake monument base on the exact spot where the Mechanical Volunteers had put up the memorial in 1817. In fact, the monument had toppled by the time Buniavas acquired the ground.

In recent years, an interested patriotic group cast a number of concrete shafts, presumably to serve as replacements for the original shaft, and four of these objects are found on the property. The substitution of the concrete shaft would raise the height of the original memorial to considerably more than four feet.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

B4-635

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1817, 1945

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Lt. Thomas Towson and Colonel Small

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This monument was put up slightly less than three years after the Battle of North Point at a spot where, according to the inscription on the memorial, the advanced part under Major Richard K. Heath of the Fifth Regiment, Maryland Militia, encountered the front of the British column moving toward Baltimore from its landing place at Old Roads Bay. Here were killed both Major General Robert Ross, the British Commander, and Private Aquilla Randall of the Fifth. The skirmish took place on September 12, 1814, at about 2 p.m., and historians have never resolved the question of who killed Ross or whether he died as a result of musket fire or rifle fire. Ross's own tomb at Halifax, Nova Scotia, states that he was engaged in routing the Americans. The defending forces indeed fell back from this spot, withdrawing up Long Log Lane 0.85 mile to their fortified position at the narrowest part of Patapsco Neck, a spot on Old North Point Road now called Battle Acre.

The military events are fully reported in the reports of Generals John Stricker and Samuel Smith, often reprinted.

Presumably, the site selected for the monument was identified with some accuracy; Scharf's history of Maryland states that during the skirmish of the advanced parties, the American left was in the woods and their right was across the road in a field. (1) Thus, the woods would have been on the north side (monument and tavern side) of Old North Point Road (Md. Route 20). Battle sketches in Swanson's Perilous Fight show no structures at this spot; no buildings appear in Joshua Shaw's painting of 1820 which shows a lonely rider in a grove contemplating the spot where Ross fell. (2)

The veterans of the skirmish returned to the site on July 21, 1817, and assembled the monument and dedicated it with military ceremony, all on the same day. The event was described in the Baltimore American of July 28, 1817, under the headline: "Dulci et decorum est pro Patria mori."

On Monday last, "THE FIRST MECHANICAL VOLUNTEERS," one of the Companies attached to the Fifth Regiment erected on the spot where the advanced party under Major Heath was engaged with the British forces, a MONUMENT to the memory of AQUILLA RANDALL, one of the members, who fell in that skirmish.—

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

The company, headed by their commander, Capt. B. C. Howard, marched from town at an early hour; and having been joined on the ground, at eleven o'clock, by Col. Heath, Lt. Col. Barry, Major Steuart, and several other officers of the regiment, the ceremony of putting up the Monument was then commenced, and in a very short time completed under the direction of Mr. Towson (Lieut. of the Company)--Indeed, much commendation is due to this gentleman (and no less to Col. Small, who assisted in the design) for the style and good taste in which the Monument is executed. He has aimed at simplicity and neatness, and he has not been disappointed.

The monument is a pyramid of white stone, about four feet high, resting on a well proportioned pedestal, which bears the four following inscriptions:

(On the side facing the Road)

How beautiful is Death, when earned by Virtue

(On the opposite side)

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF AQUILLA RANDALL
Who Died in bravely defending his Country and his home,
On the memorable 12th of September,
1814
Aged 24 years.

(On the side up the Road)

THE FIRST MECHANICAL VOLUNTEERS
Commanded by Capt. B.C. Howard,
in the 5th Regiment M.M.
HAVE ERECTED THIS MONUMENT,
As a tribute of their respect for
THE MEMORY OF
THEIR GALLANT BROTHER IN ARMS

(On the side down the Road)

IN THE SKIRMISH
WHICH OCCURRED AT THIS SPOT,
Between the advanced party under
Major Richard K. Heath,
Of the fifth Regiment M.M.
And the front of the British Column,
Major GENERAL ROSS
Commander of the British Forces,
Received his MORTAL WOUND. (3)

The American also carried the full text of Captain Howard's speech, which contained the sentences:

It was here that the haughty General who declared he did not care if it rained Militia atoned with his life for his opinion My friends we have done--We commit this Monument to Destiny and Time.

Still alive in 1839, Captain Howard, having become a General, gave the Defenders' Day address at the cornerstone laying ceremonies for a never-to-be-completed monument at Battle Acre; as Orator of the Day, the General "addressed the assembled multitude for about an hour and a half." (4)

The Mechanical Volunteers committed the monument "to Destiny and Time," and neither one took much care of it. Eventually a hotel was built close to the site, the Monument Hotel or Monument House, and a "Monument House" post office existed from 1867 to 1872 and from 1879 to 1880. The hotel appears on the 1850 J.C. Sidney map and was then Mrs. Russel's. Taylor's 1859 map showed it as J. & T. Bowen's Monument House. The 1877 atlas showed it property of John Harris.

The monument was practically new when an engraving of it was made by J. Hill and published in 1820 by Matthew Carey of Philadelphia in a volume entitled Picturesque Views of American Scenery. At the time the painting that served as the model for the engraving had been made by Joshua Shaw, the monument stood unfenced in a clearing, upon a very slight mound without any structure in the background. (5)

A view of the monument appears in Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812; when drawn in November, 1860, an iron fence closely boxed in the monument on four sides. The view had been taken from Samuel Cole's house. (6) It first appeared in Harper's Monthly about four years later. (7)

Scharf in 1881 noted, "The monument shows but slight traces of the hand of time, and the inscriptions are bold and legible." (8)

A Sunday feature article of 1907 stated that General Ross had fallen just east of the monument. The lady mentioned in the story was the widow of John Butchsky, the last postmaster at "Monument House."

It is probable that Randall is not buried beneath it. Some ten years ago, when it was toppling over, Mrs. John Butchsky, proprietress of the Monument House, in front of which it stands, had it taken down and the foundations renewed.

Although it is of marble, Mrs. Butchsky keeps it well painted. In form it is an obelisk on a pedestal, about nine and on-half feet high in all, and it is surrounded by an iron railing. Each of the four faces of the pedestal has an inscription, that on the side next to the road being "How beautiful is death when earned by virtue."--the last word being spelled "vertue."

... Beneath this until the present year there appeared in black paint the legend, "Kept in repair by Mrs. John Butchsky." (9)

The official program for the Star-Spangled Banner Centennial of 1914 showed the monument in good condition, with its close-in fence unchanged from the engraving of 1860. (10)

The monument was flat on the ground and cars were parking over it when Eli Buniavas purchased the Monument House Bar in 1944. Buniavas, a native of Croatia, migrated to West Virginia in 1909, and became a coal miner and later worked in factories and on construction jobs. When he acquired the tavern in 1944, the monument came with it. Mr. Buniavas spent \$7,000 to restore the monument, and he had the worn lettering painted on with black. The monument bore an inscription, "Rebuilt Oct. 14, 1945 by Eli Buniavas (Monument House)." The rebuilding was a rather elaborate production for so small a monument - Mr. Buniavas set it atop a concrete wedding cake pyramid, five steps high, surrounded by an iron fence, and the entire area enclosed in an elliptical lawn 90 feet long by 20 feet wide, the lawn shored up by curbstone material. (11)

Mr. Buniavas built a concrete-block addition to the bar in 1950. Some old structure apparently survives in the present building - a cornice smothered in sprayed-on rusticated stucco, old-looking rooms to the rear of the public rooms. Buniavas died in 1962 and his executor split up the property, selling the bar to a partnership and turning the rest of the acreage and the monument over to Mr. Buniavas' heir, Mrs. Rose Groh.

Executor T. Bayard Williams, Jr. had drawn a proposed 21 by 26-foot parcel under the title "Monument Lot" which he hoped the State of Maryland might acquire. However, the state did not act. (12)

For a while, the forgotten monument had a self-appointed caretaker:

Earl A. Costenbader, 54, an assistant general foreman at Bethlehem Steel, who lives in a brick house next door, once took care of the monument, but no more.

"I used to maintain it but it got so I'd ruin my lawn mower on bottles every time I tried to mow the grass," he said, "I gave up on it."
(13)

In early 1977, Mrs. Groh of Ohio sold the entire property to Mr. J. Sheridan McClees, a professional real estate appraiser, who obtained a permit to build a warehouse on the property. Mr. McClees first offered to give the monument to the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks, and also considered moving it out of the path of a proposed driveway.

On the 160th eve of putting up the monument, July 20, 1977, Dundalk and "Neck" residents were astonished to find the monument disassembled, and there was even greater consternation in the Baltimore County law office and other agencies, when the Buniavas concrete pylon or pedestal was bulldozed on the next day, the anniversary itself. There was much relief among preservationists when Mr. McClees explained that he intended to replace the monument in its 1817 condition when the construction work was completed. (14)

Notes:

1. T. J. Scharf, History of Maryland (Philadelphia, 1882), 2:109.
2. Lois McCauley, Maryland Historical Prints (Baltimore, 1976), p. 157.
3. Baltimore American, July 28, 1817, p. 2, col. 5.
4. Baltimore American, September 14, 1839, p. 2.
5. McCauley, Historical Prints, p. 130.
6. Benson J. Lossing, Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812 (New York, 1868), p. 964.
7. "Scenes in the War of 1812," Harpers Monthly Magazine, 28 (March, 1864): 441ff.
8. T. J. Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia, 1881), p. 933.
9. Lewis Beeman Browne, Rev., "Battle of North Point in Legend and Tradition," Sun, September 8, 1907, p. 13.
10. Frank A. O'Connell, National Star-Spangled Banner Centennial (Baltimore, 1914), p. 34.
11. "Battlefield Neglect: None Cared But Immigrant," Evening Sun, May 28, 1952.
12. Judicial Records, OTG 728, f. 90, 123, 127.
13. Wayne Hardin, "Ghost Soldiers of 1814 Wouldn't Recognize Site," Evening Sun, April 4, 1972, p. C-1.
14. Monte I. Trammer, "Countian to Restore 160-Year-Old Monument," Sun, July 24, 1977, p. B-2.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

T. J. Scharf, Chronicles of Baltimore, (Baltimore, 1874., p. 391-392.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

Immediate area of monument.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Yet undetermined; construction in progress.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE None

COUNTY None

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John McGrain

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ORGANIZATION

BALTIMORE COUNTY

DATE

Office of Planning and Zoning

July 25, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438